

“Developing Management Skills” : David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron

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(Received on: 14 April, 2014)

“Common sense and common knowledge are not necessarily common practice. Knowing and doing is not the same thing. Being able to analyze a case, identify a problem, or recite a correct answer to a question is not equivalent to being able to actually implement efficient management skills.” Management Skills are the skills needed to manage one’s own life as well as relationships with others and thus it is a ceaseless endeavor. Companies that place workers at the core of their strategies produce higher long term return. Successful organizations have managers with well developed people-management skills. Efficient management of people is the most significant factor in predicting longevity and for the survival of a firm. Efficient management fosters financial success, whereas less-efficient management fosters financial distress. Being competent in fundamental management skills means manager’s skill in implementing the various personal characteristics and organizational practices. Management skills form the vehicle by which management strategy, management practice, tools and techniques, personality attributes and style work to produce effective outcomes in organization. Management skills are the building blocks upon which effective management rests. They are the means by

which managers translate their own style, strategy and favorite tools or techniques into practice.

David A Whetten & Kim S Cameron in their book “Developing Management Skills” describes the characteristics of effective management. Stress is laid on the development of management skills, which is primarily the learner’s responsibility. Application is a crucial component of the skill improvement process but it takes extra effort and ingenuity to make application exercise effective and worthwhile. The book is helpful in the application of inside the classroom principles to the life-activities of the learners. David A Whetten & Kim S Cameron have focused on those skills which are important for successful management and leadership, consequently the book is divided into four parts.

‘Personal Skills’ are the skills that may not involve other people but relates to the management of self. The authors have included clusters of inter-related behavior viz. developing self-awareness, managing personal stress and solving problems analytically and creatively. These skills comprise the overall ‘personal management skills’. The included chapters are inter-related to each other, such that each relies at least partially on the others to be performed successfully.

'Interpersonal Skills' are the skills required for building relationship. According to the authors, communicating supportively, power and influence strategies, motivating others and managing conflicts are some of the issues that arise in interactions with other people. These skills overlap each other and hence performance of a skill effectively depends on the successful performance of other skills as well.

'Group Skills' are the skills needed for empowering and delegating, building effective teams and teamwork, and leading positive change. Such skills focus on the key issues that arise when one is involved with a group of people either as a leader or as a group member. These skills too overlap each other and are also linked with the personal and interpersonal skills. In other words, the competencies developed from personal and interpersonal skills support the performance of group skills. In addition to the above mentioned three core-management skills, the authors have highlighted three communication skills- Making oral and written presentations, conducting interviews, and conducting meetings. These specialized communication skills are relevant for those who have little managerial experience or skill training. They foster skill development needed to implement assignments typically included in a management skill-building course. And

according to the authors, these skills are prerequisites for building skills in the previously discussed core-management areas.

To bridge the academic realm of theory and research and the organizational realm of effective practice, one has to constantly translate proven principles from both realms into practice. "Developing Management Skills" is one such book. It is not intended just for individuals who plan to enter managerial positions or who currently manage organizations. It is also meant to help one better manage many aspects of life and relationship. It helps one actually change one's behavior, improve one's competence and be more savvy in one's relationships with different kinds of people. It is intended to improve one's social and emotional intelligence. As John Holt (1964) on equating management skills to intelligence puts it, "When we talk about intelligence, we do not mean the ability to get a good score or a certain kind of test or even the ability to do well in school; these are at best only indicators of something larger, deeper and far more important. By intelligence we mean a style of life, a way of behaving in various situations. The true test of intelligence is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don't know what to do." Fostering the development of such intelligence seems to be the goal of this book.